

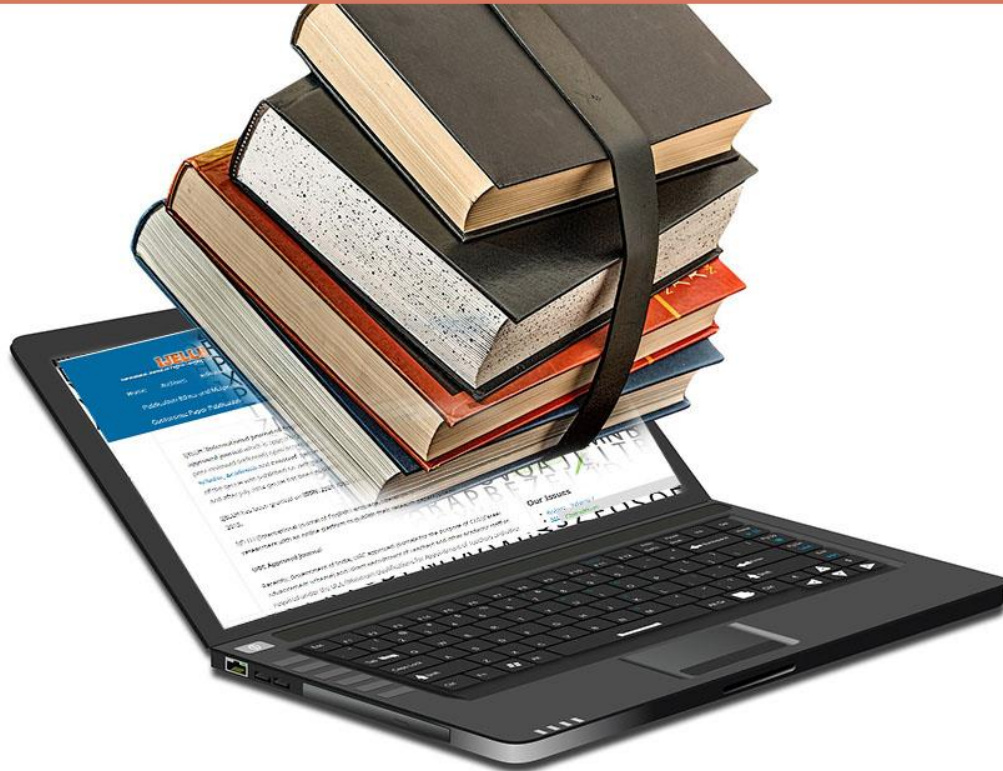
ISSN INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER

ISSN-2321-7065

IJELLH

International Journal of English Language, Literature in Humanities

Indexed, Peer Reviewed (Refereed), UGC Approved Journal



Volume 7, Issue 3, March 2019

www.ijellh.com

Dr Alapati. Purnachandra Rao,
Associate Professor of English,
Prasad V Potluri Siddhartha Institute of Technology,
Kanuru, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, India
aprtoapr@gmail.com

Portrayal of discontented Love in Rabindranath Tagore's, "Nashtanir"

Abstract

During Victorian age, marriage was not romanticized as portrayed in many of the novels of that period. Ironically, love played a minor role in the wedlock which was just considered an agreement between a man and a woman in what they followed some generally accepted guidelines. When a Victorian man and woman married, the rights of the woman were legally transferred to her spouse. It is observed that men were supposed to look after their wives, and thought that their loyalty should not matter. On the contrary, if women were caught cheating, they were seen like disrespecting the care of their husbands. It explains the existing inequality between men and women in Victorian times. Tagore deftly portrays the discontented love which is not addressed by a man promptly towards a woman in his novella, "Nashtanir".

Key words: Victorian age, love, wedlock, inequality, loyalty

Rabindranath Tagore is one of the significant Indian writers of Victorian period. He portrayed subtle relationship between a man and a woman in the novella, "Nashtanir" (The Broken Nest) which was actually written in Bengali. It primarily elucidates Indian family situation during

the Victorian period. P. Athahar in the article, "Irrevocable Ethics in Rabindranath Tagore's *Nastanirh* translated into *Charulatha* by Sathyajith Ray" states:

The story makes the reader to experience Calcutta in the year 1879 instantly. It explores the seeds of Indian's early movement for independence started in England and to evaluate the restrictions placed on educated Indian women. It seemed a Victorian England but instead it is Victorian India in which an ignored wife, on the point of breakthrough, to self-identity and self-awareness. She begins to see male dominion as a hallow façade of breads, braces and boredom. (Athahar, 43).

It is observed that women are isolated from their husbands for most of their life as their husbands are very busy in the professional world. It also explains the lives of the rich Bengalis who were part of the Bengal Renaissance and highly influenced by the Brahmo Samaj.

Bhupati is a member of the cultured class who is not in need of doing work for a living although he is the editorship of a very Anglo-friendly English language newspaper which becomes a very engrossing, and time-consuming hobby. In this pursuit, his younger wife, Charulata is left alone at home for a long time with nothing to do. In order to fill his wife's isolation, Bhupati encourages her brother, Umapati and his wife Mandakini to move from their rural district to live in his house as well as Bhupati's young nephew Amal. Charulata, a beautiful young woman who is brilliant and well-read, wishes to continue her singing lessons in order to substitute her loneliness. Amal who is the younger cousin of Bhupati is pursuing law but he is very much interested in music. He approves of Amal's youthful energy and supports Amal's reading instruction of Charulata. As Charulata and Amal are at the same age, it is a matter of fact that she spends more time with him than her husband which results in building up their bond quickly.

Charulata spoils Amal and does not resent his repeated demands for money, food and the mending of his clothes. Bhupathi wants to fill up the vacuum in Charu's life other people sarcastically.

Charu supports Amal's habit of writing but he has no intention to publish but he usually shows only to her. He encourages her to write concurrently when she starts it after much persuasion. While they are involved in the task, it becomes a secret language to communicate their emotions. When Amal demonstrates Manda some of his script, Charu is as angry with him.

The relationship of Charu and Amal's seems to be non-sexual yet passionate pseudo-sibling bond. Sexual relationship has no place because their writing activity becomes the substitute for intercourse. The house is filled up with their songs, laughter, poetry and music. Charulata's thoughts are filled with Amal and his music and she does not realize that she has not been thinking much about her husband. After Amal's literary 'betrayal' with Manda, Charu demands that he pledges to write only for the two of them alone. Their union is accomplished by the creation of a private journal of two copies for only two readers with the title that Charu suggests: Amala, the feminine version of Amal's name. Therefore, writing can never serve as an adequate symbolic marker for Charu's selfhood. Yet, because Charu chooses to write, she is to some extent represented by the simplicity and strength of her written style, and through her desire to make writing itself a personal space, to be shared with Amal and concealed from the rest of the world. Amal's two-faced submission of Charu's writing that she intended no one else but to him is a further betrayal. It is ironical that one of Amal's pieces is included in the same issue of a magazine as Charu's and her piece is more favorably reviewed at the expense of Amal's piece as she has written it in the common Bengali language rather than Amal's more literary use of Sanskrit.

Bhupati realizes of Charu's literary efforts through her publication and he is pleased with the fact that her writing is more critically regarded than Amal's. It permanently damages the bond between Charu and Amal. Amal enthusiastically agrees to a marriage and moves to England as he discovers that he had become more closer to Charulatha than he ought to be. Charu is left desolate and filled with despair and grief and her well-meaning husband is ignorant to the true cause of her suffering. This decision leaves Charulata shattered for she is unable to come to terms with it when she pleads Amal not to leave her alone but it does not happen. Bhupati tries to warm up her by writing poetry, playing music but of no use. Soon, he is dejected when he realizes that her thoughts are filled up with Amal in her heart. It is a pathetic situation that Bhupati is not only unaware of true feelings of his wife but also his brother, Umapati's fraud nature which results in the financial collapse of his newspaper. Tagore deftly describes Bhupati's misunderstanding through symbolic description. When the outside of Bhupati's house began to crack, he is unable to examine cracks. At this juncture, Bhupati decides to restore pursuing his dream as he still has the support of his darling wife, Charulata.

Charu is involved in an affair with Amal which becomes a curse on the part of her familial life with what silent grief has overpowered her domestic life. She is unable to bear the vacuum in her personal sphere. After Amal's departure, Bhupati tries to persuade Charu by reading his translations of Tennyson and by trying to write independently in Bengali. It is very interesting that colonial men during Victorian era learn to write in Bengali either from women or for women, in a process that we might call the gendering or engendering of the mother tongue. In a way, they have taken women as objects in their writings which is a everlasting subject for literary contribution.

When the three characters are examined, readers come to realize that Bhupati is the ideal Indian man; he is faithful to his wife, he leads his family members well, he works hard in his newspaper company, and he is not the cause of misery among the other main characters in the story. He is perhaps perfect maintaining his dharma as a brother, a husband, and the breadwinner of the family, but this sense of security becomes his agony as he innocently rejects any suspicion about the emotional relationship between his wife and his brother. The reader pities Bhupati in the event that Charu indirectly reveals her affection for Amal by sending him a telegram and Bhupati receiving a strange reply which he did not expect. The readers feel a sense of pity at his unbelievable ignorance and foolishness for not being able to recognize the signs of their love towards each other.

In a way, Charu, even with all her defects, is the ideal Indian woman who remains faithful to her husband as her love for Amal was never consummated, and she follows her husband like a shadow. But Charu is a post-modern female character. She does not all express in any way how she feels for Amal, but her love for her brother-in-law is unquestionably ever-present. People cannot blame her as her husband has been busy with the business, and being a child-wife, her age makes her closer to Amal with whom she is able to make a real connection with. It is quite evident that when a man is passive and fails to address the emotional issues of his spouse, she naturally takes an opportunity to fill and fulfill it through any channel she chooses. The exchange of their literary works develop into something unknown relation stronger than mere sharing of ideas or casual critiquing. They become mirrors of each other and have found their identities in their writings and their accidental conversations. The source of their conflict revolves around their writings which leads to developing attachment to each other. Bhupati recognizes the problem

through the telegram from which they are caught. In the end, Charu feels isolation even in the company of her husband, and she remains impractical as to how she should move on with her life.

Ironically, Amal is representative of the family's presence in the couple's relationship. Indeed, the family is the foundation of Indian institutions, the close relationship within families becomes the curse of an Indian individual's progress. It is unwise to blame Bhupati for every development in the story because in the Indian context the husband becomes busy with his work to feed his family in the Victorian era. It is astonishing how the simple presence of Amal, young and full of potentials, disturb the ideal family . Amal is an instrument used by Tagore to represent the modern Indian man, struggling to find his place in the culturally and historically rich traditional and social contexts. The novella does not mention too much about his life after his marriage and migration to England. In a way, the novella is more interested in the effect of such an symbol of modernity to Bhupati and Charu's situation.

It is observed that Bhupati is not as uncaring as the husbands in other nineteenth century classics such as '*Madame Bovary*' or '*Anna Karenina*'. He is simply unaware of the fact that his uncaring nature damages his marital relationship. Charu and Amal are not willfully faithless as they simply respond to mutual emotional and intellectual needs. It is distinctly Indian; its characters act and respond within the structure of their society.

'*The Broken Nest*' is a very good work whose virtue lies in its brevity. The psychological realism of Rabindranath Tagore is beautifully explored through the unspoken dialogue, being suppressed that the three main characters are all captives of. Through Charu, Bhupati and Amal, Tagore paints an emotional domestic drama where the characters are aware of their own personal feelings and how they suffer because of their feelings of love or emotional attachment. He also

depicts how the characters fail to deal with such issues in the existing institutional relationships and their cultural upbringing and social mores. Despite all of these tensions and conflicts, Tagore manages to narrate modern versions of Ramayana where even though the ideal man and the ideal woman are married and where brotherly love exists, and the complexity of human emotions and the relevance in the modern world.

Tagore delineates the saga of Indian family system where the human drama is the crux of the society. He reveals the emotional psyche of what a modern man or woman in India is in a fast-changing world but simultaneously entrapped within an environment that promotes a patriarchal system, where women's feelings and ideas are overlooked, where modern feelings displace their traditional mindsets and heritage. As the society is the dynamic, Tagore takes his themes for his writings from the society.

Works Cited

Athahar, P. "Irrevocable Ethics in Rabindranath Tagore's *Nastanirh* translated into *Charulatha* by Sathyajith Ray". *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Transnational Studies*. Vol. 3. Issue.3., 2016 (July-September). 43. Print.

Banerjee, Lopamudra. *The Broken Home*: English Translation of Rabindranath Tagore's *Nastanirh*. Final Draft Editing & Publishing Services. (May 18, 2016). Print.